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Agricultural Summary: For the month of January 2004, snowfall and colder temperatures increased the level of livestock care needed, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. Minimal moisture for cover and spring growth remain a concern for wheat producers in the southwest, south central, and portions of the Panhandle. The State continued to be rated in extreme drought in the major wheat producing areas. Producer activities included livestock care and tax work.

This release is based on reports and data from FSA county directors, county extension educators, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center. Current county specific comments plus current and historic PDF files of Weather and Crop reports can be found at: http://www.nass.usda.gov/ne/cropwthr/cmts_cur.htm

Weather Summary: The end of month snow depth averaged about 4.9 inches with little to no snow cover reported in the major wheat producing areas but up to 9 inches in the eastern third of the State. December temperatures averaged above normals the second and third weeks but below normals the first and last week of the month.

Field Crops Report: **Wheat** condition rated 9 percent very poor, 19 poor, 41 fair, 31 good, and 0 excellent. This is an improvement over last year's condition of 23 percent good or excellent. **Hay and forage** supplies were mostly adequate statewide. Last month's weather required producers to provide hay to livestock.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report: **Cattle and calves** condition rated 1 percent poor, 13 fair, 74 good, and 12 excellent. Calving was underway. Snow cover in the eastern two thirds of the State limited grazing potential of stalk fields.

The following are comments from Nebraska's FSA County Executive Directors and county Extension Educators:

NORTHWEST

DAWES: For the most part the winter has been good to livestock and crop producers. We have had some moisture and the temps have not been bad. Hay supplies are in good shape.

SIOUX: Winter is fairly open so far. This week the temperatures have been cold again. Price of hay has come down considerably since fall.

NORTH CENTRAL

HOLT/BOYD: Moisture is still the big concern. Forage supplies are in good supply at this time due to the mild and open winter to this point in time. The present cold weather and snow cover will result in heavier feeding of livestock.

NORTHEAST

ANTELOPE: The last week to 10 days the temperature has been below normal. Sunday, the 25th, snowfall ranged from 3 to 6 inches. Most cows have been on stalks with some supplemental feeding. Hay supplies are good.

CEDAR: Cedar County received its first good amount of snow for the season - most all fields are covered and producer will have to feed hay/silage to cattle in stalks.

DAKOTA: Extreme cold at present and covered stalk fields are requiring heavy feeding of cow/calf herds, some are even supplementing with grain because of the sub zero temperatures.

KNOX: Marketing grain, tax work, FSA program sign up, care of livestock.

EAST CENTRAL

NANCE/BOONE: Winter storms and cold temperatures have stressed livestock this past week. Beef producers have started feeding some hay to cattle as stalks are snow covered. Producers have been busy working on ending year financial reports and taxes.

NANCE: Many producers are working on their end of the year paperwork for their taxes to be filed by March 1 and paperwork required by the banks to continue another year with financing.

PLATTE: Weather - winter storm on Sunday & Monday left nine inches of snow, the 20 mph winds caused some drifting in the country.

WASHINGTON: Heavy snow and extremely cold weather have really cut down winter activities at this time. The livestock people are having a difficult time in getting bunks cleaned up and livestock fed.

SOUTHWEST

CHASE: Still very dry!

FRONTIER: The month of January has seen little moisture for this area. There is no snow cover at this time. We have had bitter cold temperatures the last few days, which causes concern over winterkill in the winter wheat that is not rooted down and already has a poor stand in many places. Feed supplies seem to be more than adequate, as cattle continue to graze in open fields.

HAYES/HITCHCOCK: Very dry. Concerns about cold temperatures (below zero) on wheat fields that have no snow cover.

SOUTH CENTRAL

FURNAS: Winter wheat is in very poor condition. The severe cold that we are having now might cause a lot of winter kill because of the dry conditions and not much snow cover. Livestock are in good condition with plenty of feed supplies.

SOUTHEAST

GAGE: Recent heavy snow and very cold weather are stressing livestock and requiring hay feeding.

JEFFERSON: Weather has been generally very good. Stalks have been open which has enabled cattle to remain on the fields. This results in hay stalks lasting longer than anticipated.

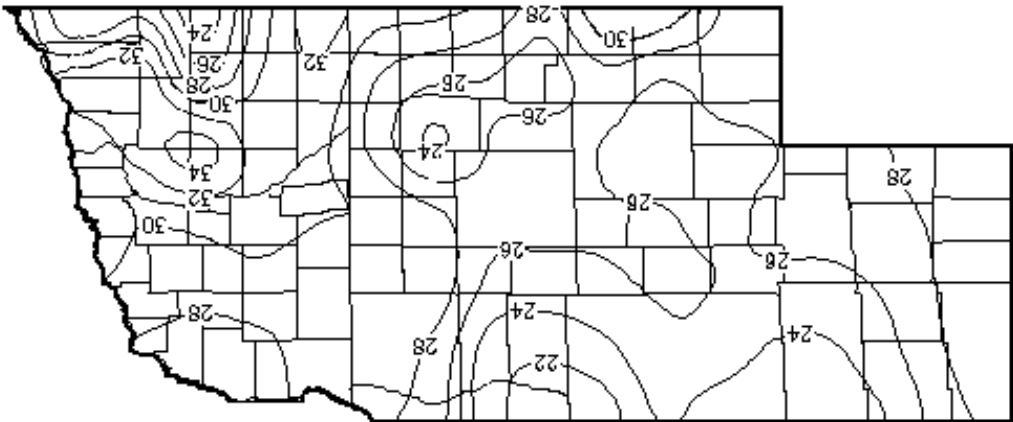
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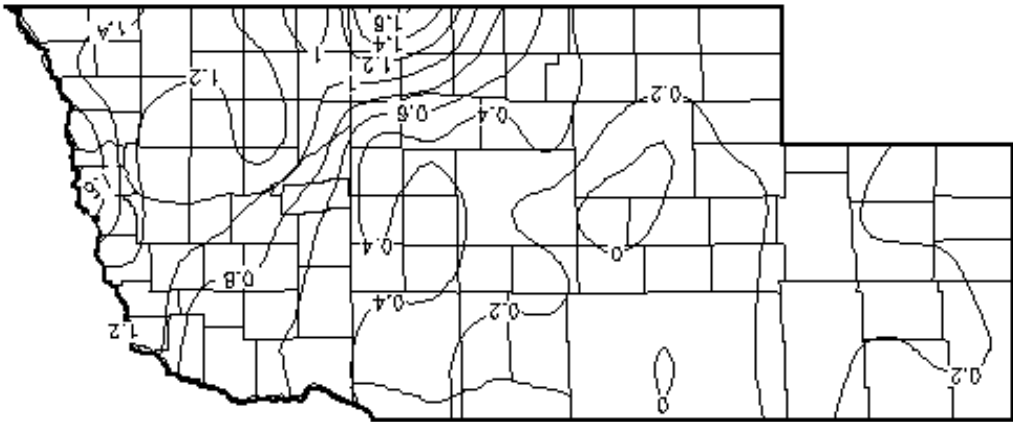
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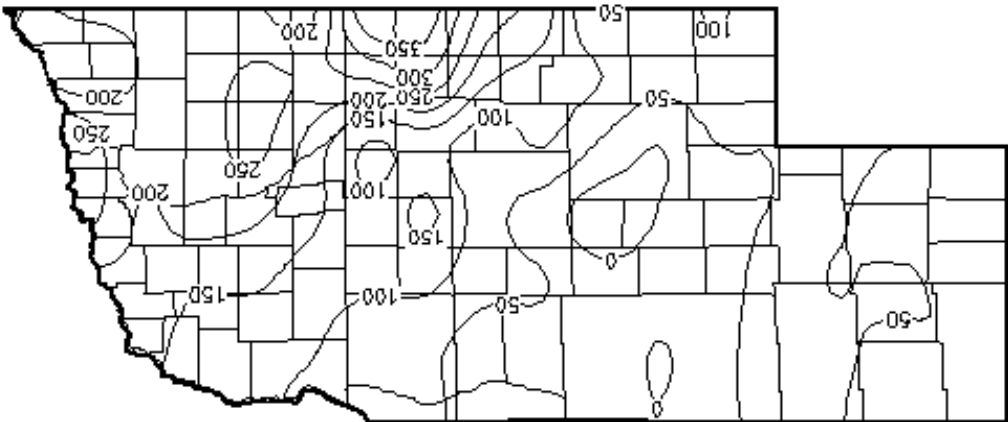
¹ Source: High Plains Regional Climate Centers Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN).



AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 1, 2004¹



PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF JANUARY 2004¹



PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR JANUARY 2004¹